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The Gospel of Saint Matthew in West Saxon. By James Wilson Bright, Professor of English Philology in the Johns Hopkins University.

The Gospel of Saint John in West Saxon. By J. W. Bright. With a Glossary by L. M. Harris. D. C. Heath & Company, Publishers.

These two volumes of the Gospels in Anglo-Saxon, edited by Professor Bright of the Johns Hopkins University, are offered to the public among the first-fruits of the Belles Lettres series projected by the publishers, under the general direction of Professor E. M. Brown, of the University of Cincinnati. This series is designed to embrace the entire history of English literature and to include the best work of representative authors. The initial volumes before us, which belong to the earliest period, furnish additional evidence of the growing interest in the early history of our vernacular ; and they will doubtless meet with a warm reception by all students of Old English. They fully sustain Professor Bright's reputation for thorough, scholarly work which he won for himself through his excellent *Anglo-Saxon Reader* and his *Gospel of Saint Luke in Anglo-Saxon*, published now more than a half score of years ago.

Of the two volumes under review the edition of John is much fuller than that of Matthew and has evidently received far more attention from the editor. Indeed, the edition of Matthew is without notes, glossary, or any other help to interpretation, containing only the bare text, with the variant readings in foot-notes. However, the edition of John supplies all the desirable features which the edition of Luke lacks. Still it can but be a matter of regret that both volumes are not equally complete and well equipped, in order to facilitate the interpretation of the text.

The edition of John leaves little to be desired by the average student of Old English, whose object is simply to have the text in a convenient form. It is provided with an introduction in which various pertinent questions are discussed, a glossary, a bibliography and an appendix. The text is based upon the original Corpus manuscript and has been collated with the several other extant manuscripts, such as the Bodleian, the Cottonian, etc. These supply the variant readings all of which are duly noted in the foot-notes. The accuracy of Skeat's edition, Professor Bright concedes,

obviated for him the necessity of copying the entire text, thus facilitating the labor of collation. We may therefore now rest assured that at last we have a trustworthy edition of the West Saxon Gospels, together with variant readings, some minor additions and corrections, all duly indicated.

In the introduction Professor Bright gives a full description of each of the extant manuscripts, discussing its date, provenance and similar points of interest. He draws attention to Bede's lost translation of the Fourth Gospel and then very properly points out the importance of the Corpus manuscript copy of the Version as the primary authority for the text, its close proximity in time and in linguistic features to the lost original. After a detailed account of the Bodleian he shows from what sources its *lacunae* were supplied and comments briefly on the fragmentary Cotton manuscript.

In the discussion of the relation of the several manuscripts to the lost original Bright accepts the view, now generally accredited, that the manuscripts transmit copies of one and the same Version and that not one of the surviving copies has been directly copied from another. This does not, of course, apply to the late copies, Royal and Hatton, which are of little or no authority in determining the correct text. As to the question of the authorship of the Version, Bright is disposed to reject the theory of dual or triple authorship advanced a decade of years ago by Drake, viz., that the Matthew is by one translator, the Mark and Luke by another, and the John by a third (if it is not by the translator of Matthew). It is, no doubt, true that the evidence adduced in support of the unity of authorship of the Mark and Luke does not carry conviction. While not claiming to solve this perplexing problem for us, Bright, however, suggests a line of investigation which may ultimately lead to the solution. He advises that in the further study of this question due regard be had to the differences in style of the Gospels in the original, and to the translator's gradual variations in manner, such as the increasing use in John, of *that* as an introductory particle for indirect discourse, and the growing tendency to inversion of words and clauses, so noticeable in the latter part of Luke and in John.

Professor Bright apparently accepts the view that the Latin original of the Version, while following, in the main, the Vulgate, yet contained fragments from various old versions that were current in Western Europe with the pure Vulgate text revised by Jerome.

It is an established fact that the current Vulgate text in the different countries of Western Europe was not kept scrupulously pure, but was contaminated by the persistent retention, in some localities, of various Old Latin readings. This explains the marked diversity in the readings of the mediæval manuscripts of the Vulgate. Besides, there were distinct national types, such as the Irish and the Roman. Both of these found their way into England, with the result that the Anglo-Saxon type became mixed, being primarily Roman with a considerable sprinkling of Irish readings. This fact seems sufficient, as Professor Bright intimates, to have given rise to the theory of divided authorship.

In the appendix Professor Bright gives a reproduction of Napier's edition of the Lakelands Fragment of the Gospel of St. John. Bright avers that his own independent examination confirms the conclusion of the Oxford scholar, that this fragment and the Cambridge University manuscript of the Version are united in being separately derived from a copy that is not directly represented by any other of the extant manuscripts.

The notes are sufficiently copious, offering explanations of all the more difficult points in the text. There are numerous cross references, and the student is frequently referred to Wordsworth and White's critical edition of the Vulgate, both for the accepted and for the variant readings of the original. The independent translations of portions of the Gospel by the prose writers of the Anglo-Saxon period have also been incorporated in the notes,—a task which has been greatly facilitated by Cook's *Biblical Quotations in Old English Prose Writers*. The Rubrics call for some comment, which Professor Bright has not overlooked, and in each instance he cites the proper reference in Guéranger's *L'Année Liturgique*, for verification. The glossary, which is at once succinct and complete, is the work of Professor L. M. Harris.

We shall await with interest the publication of the second and third Gospels, which Professor Bright promises in his Prefatory Note to his Matthew. Meanwhile, we trust that the editor will appreciate the student's desire for helps and apparatus and that he will supply the Mark and Luke with such aids as will contribute to a lucid interpretation of the text, as he has done in his admirable edition of John.

EDWIN W. BOWEN.